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Past and Present Trends in Quebec and Ireland**

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Migration and Domestic Service:
Past and Present Trends in Quebec and Ireland

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Introduction

During the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century, middle and upper-class households extensively employed servants, maids and nannies. Domestic service was an institution of considerable cultural significance and a vital element of middle-class domesticity, including in Quebec and in Ireland. Bradbury and Myers argued that in the 1830s in Montreal, for instance:

"Bourgeois understandings of gender and marriage, in which a leisured wife was supported by her husband and freed from hard labour through the work of domestics, were spreading."² Irish middle class households were no different. Domestic servants were an integral part of the social fabric of Irish history.

Irish women were, however, extensively employed as servants not just in Ireland but as migrant workers in other countries from the nineteenth century onward, including in Quebec and Canada. Social historians have widely

documented how, from the 1840s on, Ireland became a prolific net exporter of female migrant domestic workers and carers for global labour markets (Bielenberg 2000).³ In nineteenth century Canada, Irish women were significantly overrepresented in the main urban centres in the domestic service sector. Marilyn Barber noted the prominence of women among Irish emigrants and how this contrasted with other nineteenth century emigration movements to Canada, which were dominated by men. In addition: "Not surprisingly, Irish, and especially Irish Catholic, women were also more often servants. Indeed, Katz concluded that almost every Irish Catholic woman in Hamilton spent part of her life as a resident servant. Similarly, in 1861 Fredericton, most servant-girls either came from Ireland or had parents born in Ireland. Claudette Lacelle, using the 1871 manuscript census, has shown that Irish women also dominated domestic service in Toronto, Halifax and Montreal. Hence, domestic service in 19th century Canada became identified with Irish women."⁴

Domestic service therefore became particularly synonymous with Irish ethnicity in Quebec in the nineteenth century due to the predominance of Irish servants in Montreal, in particular. Likewise, in the US, for instance, Irish female immigrants also dominated the sector in the large urban centres especially⁵: "By 1855, Irish women accounted for 74 per cent of all domestic servants in New York City. In 1900, 54 per cent of all Irish-born women in the United States still worked as domestic servants (even though immigration from other European countries had surpassed immigration from Ireland) and represented just under half of all the servants in New York and Philadelphia."⁶

In Ireland itself, domestic service was the most common occupation for women in the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century.⁷ Daughters of labourers and small farmers often went straight from school into 'service'.⁸ The numbers peaked in 1881 when nearly half of all women in paid employment in Ireland were indoor servants. Although the numbers

subsequently declined, domestic service was still the largest single source of paid work for women until the 1950s.

Irish domestic servants are therefore central actors in the history of ethnic relations in North America and are important subjects in the history of Quebec. A rich, international historiography of the intersection of class, gender and ethnicity in the lives of Irish migrant domestic servants has consequently emerged in recent decades in conjunction with the emergence of scholarship focused on women's history.⁹ Domestic service is also now considered a key dynamic in the historical analysis of gender and class in Ireland and in the history of Ireland itself.

By the middle of the twentieth century, however, the employment of working-class maids and domestic servants in Western households was in decline and presumed to be 'dying out' as a social and economic practice. According to Dudden, in the case of the US a number of causes of the twentieth-century decline of domestic service can be identified, most notably new immigration restrictions and the growth of alternative employment opportunities for women in the clerical, sales, and light manufacturing sectors.¹⁰ The upward mobility and so-called 'assimilation' of Irish women into American society was presumed to be a factor in their decreasing employment in the sector, along with the arrival of new groups of female migrants willing to do this kind of low status work.

However, recent studies have begun to document the widespread *re-introduction* of migrant domestic servants/workers globally into middle class, private households, in the twenty-first century, including in Ireland and Quebec.¹¹ Domestic work has become highly relevant on a local and global scale. The recent phenomenon of women being employed as migrant domestic workers transnationally is nothing new in the context of Irish history - where Irish women dominated this sector in the US and Canada, in the nineteenth century in particular. But the widespread employment of migrant

women as domestic workers *in* Ireland and the employment of domestics in Quebec from other global destinations apart from Ireland, in more recent times, is, however, a new and unprecedented development at a time when domestic service was considered to have declined.¹² In contrast to earlier waves of migrant domestic service, as Lutz et al. demonstrate: “not only is the ethnic and national diversity of the countries of origin of migrant workers noteworthy. . . but so is the speed of change in the new geographic relations between states.”¹³

This chapter provides an analysis of these recent trends by focusing on the re-introduction of domestic service in Irish households during the period encompassing ‘the Celtic Tiger’ and its aftermath, a global phenomenon which has also received attention in Quebec.¹⁴ The re-emergence of domestic service will be simultaneously linked to the emergence of immigration as a new trend in Ireland in this period (Ireland has both historically and is currently a country of net emigration) and to the profound changes that occurred in Irish women’s lives during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ boom. In particular, Irish *mothers* participated in the labour market in unprecedented numbers throughout this period, which created increased demand for affordable childcare and ‘bought in’ domestic services (such as, cleaning and caring).¹⁵ The unprecedented entry of women with young children into the workforce over a short period, combined with a baby boom and highly inflated child care rates, created a pronounced care deficit/provision crisis for working parents. In the process, a demand for affordable domestic and care workers *from outside Ireland* was generated.¹⁶

The analysis aims to understand and theorise how the private arena of home and the domestic sphere generated new inequalities and forms of social stratification in Irish society, during the Celtic Tiger, based on a complex interplay of gender, class, ethnicity and globalisation. The Celtic Tiger marked a period of rapid economic development and social change at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The impact of globalisation and intensive neo

liberalism on one of the most local, domestic and essential of pursuits in Ireland - mothering - is explored.

The Re-emergence of Domestic Service in Ireland

In the decades prior to the Celtic Tiger, it was working class Irish women who were primarily recruited as domestics in Ireland and, for the most part, only in very well off 'exceptional' households. The recent demand for domestic services in middle class private households in the West, and the shift to migrant women being employed in vast numbers in this sector across the globe, has been studied internationally, in recent years, including by my colleagues in the EUROCORES/ESF funded 'Migration and Networks of Care in Europe' project.¹⁷ Internationally, feminist research has widely documented how demand for domestic services has risen both in developed countries, where it had almost vanished, and in fast-growing economies such as Hong Kong and Singapore.¹⁸ The demand for migrant domestic workers has been linked to many economic and demographic forces - such as the feminisation of the workforce, an ageing population with care needs, the erosion of the welfare state and privatisation of care, and the 'decline' of the extended family. Bridget Anderson, however, suggests that the situation is more complex. For instance, domestic workers are not *just* employed by women who work outside their homes, and the tasks involved in this work can vary from cleaning only for just a few short hours a week to full-time (sometimes 'live-in') caring and cleaning. For Anderson, paid domestic work is different from other kinds of low-wage work: "Significantly, domestic work is deeply embedded in status relationships, some of them overt, but others less so. And these relationships are all the more complex because they fall along multiple axes. There are relationships among women, but often women of different races or nationalities- certainly of different classes."¹⁹ Contemporary studies

of domestic service in Ireland are scarce. One important, early study was published on the subject of the emerging phenomenon of migrant domestic work in Ireland by the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland (MRCI) in 2004.²⁰ The report reiterated that domestic and care work undertaken in the private home is not new to Ireland. Historically, wealthy households paid women from working-class backgrounds to undertake tasks such as cleaning, cooking, and caring for children and older people. As a direct result of the economic and social changes which have taken place during the Celtic Tiger, it was outlined how it is now more likely to find a migrant woman fulfilling these roles in Irish households. The report, based on interviews with twenty migrant workers who sought support from the MRCI over a six month period in 2003, demonstrated that for many of these women their working conditions were proving problematic and, in that regard, ample evidence and studies had been produced to show that Ireland was certainly not unique amongst western democratic states in relation to the problems associated with this sector.

Stark evidence was presented demonstrating problems in relation to pay and deductions from pay; the broad and varied range of tasks allocated; long hours of work; lack of access to holiday and leave entitlements; lack of privacy; and experiences of discrimination. The findings highlighted the lived experiences of migrant women employed in the private home in Ireland, examining the various ways they are economically and socially excluded, in the context of how domestic work is defined and structured in Ireland.

Ireland therefore moved very rapidly from being a long standing country of net emigration to being a country of net immigration in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In terms of gender and migration, specifically, Jane Pillinger authored an important report on women and immigration in Ireland, which stated the following:²¹

- “(i) Women migrant workers experience and work in the context of a labour market characterised by a broader system of gender inequality. Gender gaps exist in pay, conditions of employment, access to promotion and career development, and the participation of women in decision-making. Occupational segregation also exists whereby women are clustered into lower paid and lower skilled jobs.
- (ii) Women migrant workers have a range of experiences that relate to their status as migrant women. Particular issues arise for migrant women in relation to pregnancy and caring responsibilities in a context where there is an unequal sharing of caring between men and women. Gender stereotyping can also result in a misrepresentation of migrant women as dependents of migrant men rather than as being financially independent or in misrepresentations in relation to their sexuality.
- (iii) The intersection between ethnicity and gender can involve a double discrimination based on racism and sexism experienced by migrant women. Their identities, roles and situations are therefore shaped by a range of inequalities. The Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) highlights that migrant women are faced with multiple discrimination in society at large and in their own communities and that the intersection of gender and ethnic and religious factors negatively affects access to health, education, permanent residence status, work permits and employment.”

In contrast to the MRCI’s methodological approach, which was framed by direct access to migrant workers seeking assistance at an NGO, research conducted for this chapter was ethnographic and based on participant observation of care work and motherhood in a community setting. The methodological underpinning of this chapter connects closely with Arlie Hochschild’s theoretical approach, which combines critical theory,

ethnographic observation, and a focus on human emotion. The approach taken in understanding the attendant changes in working mother's lives during the Celtic Tiger and how this intersects with the emergence of migrant domestic work in the provision of childcare specifically in private households is also reflexive and ethnographic in scope as well as being biographically grounded. The ethnographic setting of an urban Irish community, mothers and children's networks provides a rich source of data on otherwise often hidden and concealed aspects of localised networks of care and care regimes.

Mothers with children and childcare workers constantly strike up conversations with other women with children at the school gates, the playschool, the butchers shop, in work, in shops, the doctor's surgery etc about care dilemmas and their children. Intensive mothering is not something a mother does, in various forms, in the confines of her own home - intensive mothering is *a prevailing discourse* that saturates community and society.

The conflicting demands of work and home that emerged in women's lives in Ireland, during the Celtic Tiger, have been neglected in mainstream socio-economic analysis. Sharon Hays has argued that working mothers today confront not only conflicting demands on their time and energy but also conflicting ideas about how they are to behave: they must be nurturing and unselfish while engaged in child rearing but competitive and ambitious at work. As more and more women enter the workplace, it would seem reasonable for society to make mothering a simpler and more efficient task. Instead, she argues, an ideology of 'intensive mothering' has developed that only exacerbates the tensions working mothers face.

The Cultural Contradictions of 'Motherhood' during the Celtic Tiger

Irish cultural identity has traditionally been associated with a strong sense of kinship and community, with care/a duty of care to others considered a core social value. Mothers were given a central role in the Irish social structure in

the twentieth century and in Catholic social teaching. Arensberg and Kimball and others in the 1930s examined how extended families cared for each other in times of crisis, sickness and birth, for example; and neighbours watched out for each other and knew each others business as part of a broader ethic and system of care and reciprocity.²² Mothers performed the core nurturing role in the reproduction of the traditional family, community and society.

Women in Ireland were ideologically expected to devote their lives to caring for loved ones in the home in the post-independence period. Article 41.2.2 of the 1937 Irish Constitution, for instance, still states today: "Woman by her life within the home gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved." However, in reality, rapid changes have occurred in Irish family life in recent years in the context of a society that embraced neo liberal capitalism and economic globalisation with particular fervour. The arena of 'home' and the domestic sphere was not unaffected and also changed considerably in the process. As Collins and Wickham have argued: "It is not the case that increased participation of women has been driving economic growth – it is the increased participation rate of younger mothers and especially mothers with young children that has been fuelling the Celtic Tiger."²³ It is in this context that the practice of 'buying in' care and domestic services in private homes was widely adopted.

Research on paid domestic work performed by migrants in contemporary Ireland has begun to emerge in light of the growth of the practice of employing migrant women to perform a wide range of care and/or domestic duties, in private middle class households.²⁴ The present situation today differs from its earlier appearance as a class based phenomenon mainly in that domestic workers are often *migrant* women from Eastern Europe, from Asia or South America. Childcare in Ireland (particularly crèches which are essentially privatised) is extremely expensive and poorly subsidised or incentivised by the State. The unprecedented entry of women with children into the workforce during the Celtic Tiger, combined with a baby boom and inflated child care rates, created a pronounced care deficit/provision crisis for

working parents which in turn created a demand for domestic workers. The key decision and background to these trends was that Ireland, along with the United Kingdom and Sweden, agreed to allow citizens from the 10 countries that joined the European Union in May 2004 to work in the country immediately.²⁵ This contributed to an acceleration in EU immigration flows, a large proportion of which came from Poland (Poles have recently taken over British citizens as the largest immigrant group in Ireland). The open-door policy on migration adopted in Ireland, in turn, generated a 'plentiful supply' of migrant, female workers during the economic boom - many of whom ended up employed in care and domestic work.

A number of basic structural reasons specific to the growing demand for migrant workers in private households in Ireland can be suggested (the high cost of crèches, privatisation of care adopted by the State etc). However, it became apparent in my research that cultural factors were also influential. Many working mothers expressed a *subjective* preference for non-public childcare/in-home care of their children. Apart from the fact that public childcare places are few and that crèches are extremely expensive in Ireland, mothers who employ domestic workers reported that they considered it less desirable for very small children, particularly infants, "to be in a crèche all day" or "institutionalised at such a young age" and had an emotional preference for what was considered better quality care *in their own homes*. This ambivalence about 'the crèche' could be said to reflect cultural continuity in terms of the construction of women's role as primarily in the home in Ireland despite the relatively recent disruption of paid work to full-time mothering. Discourses of convenience were also connected with the preference of in-home care for children; "the children can be left in their pyjamas at home and be given their breakfast by their 'minder'" (which is the common language used in Ireland for childcare workers) when these mothers went off to work, "rather than having to be dressed, got ready, packed and put into the car" for perhaps a long journey to the crèche (which of course thousands of parents actually do in Ireland).

The sense of control and influence a mother has over her child's care in comparison to a crèche or other service provided in this discourse was also apparent. McDonald explored how women define what it means to delegate 'mother-work' to a paid child care provider, and how working mothers and paid caregivers negotiate the division of mothering labour, with mother-work defined as those daily tasks involved in the care and protection of small children.²⁶ For example, in interviews with mothers and paid caregivers, McDonald asked about various mothering practices, including feeding, diapering (changing nappies), bathing, disciplining, putting children to bed, and playing with them. He also asked them about the relational tasks involved in mother work: the soothing, stimulating, and connecting that are part of the everyday practices of connecting with infants and toddlers. Although separate from motherhood as a social role or identity, mother-work represents a large component of what it *means* to be a mother and to experience mothering. Therefore, the key argument is, the practice of delegating mother-work in relationship with a paid caregiver might fundamentally challenge our understanding of what it means to mother.²⁷

The trends documented in this chapter point to a changing conceptualisation of motherhood in the Irish context that incorporates delegated mothering. Yet, for McDonald this delegation of mothering to paid child care providers is practiced within a cultural context that paradoxically values "intensive mothering".²⁸ Sociologist Anne Oakley referred to the "myth of motherhood" as the belief that "all women need to be mothers, all mothers need their children, all children need their mothers." Clearly, she argued, this view of motherhood offers no legitimate place for other caregivers, and paid child care is at best a necessary evil. Yet this belief system, and particularly its emphasis on the singular mother-child bond, contradicts the lived experience of most mothers who work and delegate mother-work. Despite the predominance of intensive mothering as a cultural value, a significant percentage of children are now cared for by a non-relative in Ireland and elsewhere. The practice of mother-work for most women obviously includes

the use of paid caregivers. Yet, we live in a unique historical moment, as McDonald argues²⁹: full-time, at-home mothering is no longer the dominant mothering practice, even for middle and upper-class women, yet the *ideology* associated with this practice is still very powerful.

The changing domestic context and role of mothers and female migrants in it, in Ireland, has been neglected in recent socio-economic analysis of the Celtic Tiger. Analysis of migration and networks of care shows how fundamentally the wave of net immigration that occurred during the Celtic Tiger, as well as the recent economic downturn, should prompt us to reorient and re-evaluate in Irish studies and Irish migration studies more generally, towards an intersectionality approach that can theorise the enmeshing of gender, class and ethnicity, in the newly emerging social order. During the Celtic Tiger, at the structural level, Irish society underwent a process of fundamental re-stratification along class, gender *and* ethnic lines that is embedded in transcultural and transnational forces evident in 'everyday life' - including, the private home/household. For the first time, since the pre-Famine period, Ireland became a country of net immigration. The form/s of re-stratification that have emerged at a broader level shifts our analysis beyond the accepted distinction between class and ethnicity as separate modes of analysis in Irish studies, as had been advanced by the ESRI for instance, to looking at class, ethnicity and gender as now deeply enmeshed in contemporary Irish society. The complex interplay of dynamics of class, ethnicity and gender play themselves out in a variety of ways in the domain of the private household, where a reconfiguration of Irish family life and motherhood as well as the paid domestic labour and care work sector has also occurred in recent years. Care and domestic work in private households has reoriented from being formerly a class issue in Ireland, where predominantly Irish working class women performed childcare and domestic work (such as, cleaning) at a low cost to employers, to becoming a class, gender and ethnicity issue, with migrant (overqualified) women also performing these services in a highly unregulated and informal section of the economy. The concentration of

women in lower paid employment sectors also creates less disposable income for childcare.

In this sense Irish society has undergone a dual process of *de-traditionalisation* in the arena of the family (evident in the entry of mothers into the labour market in large numbers and emergence of delegated mothering) alongside a process of *re-stratification* (evident in the hierarchies that evolve in private domestic households employing migrant workers, particularly the unavoidable hierarchy that has emerged between Irish working mothers and the predominantly female migrant domestic workers they can afford to employ and the hierarchy Irish working mothers themselves experience, including low pay, in the workplace). In other words, as Irish women 'progressed' through increased labour market participation, new inequalities coincided – inequalities among Irish mothers and migrant domestics and inequalities among working mothers and other Irish workers.

At the same time, working mothers work within an already unequal gendered social order that structurally disadvantages Irish women as mothers (working and stay-at-home) and carers. Social research consistently highlights unequal pay in the workforce and the unequal division of labour in the home and gendered nature of care work prevalent in Irish families – what Hochschild terms, *the stalled revolution*. The detailed stories that I hear in an ethnographic network/nexus of care resonate strongly with the kind of stories told and widely documented internationally by researchers in the field: migrant women from Eastern Europe with college degrees, for example, are indeed also minding children and/or cleaning in the homes of Irish professionals which reflects the documented trend that immigrants (particularly from Eastern Europe) are generally overqualified for the work they do (the 'race to the bottom'). In addition, these stories demonstrate the gendered nature of global migration and its intersection with the unequal dynamics of global capitalism as well the implications of European women entering the workforce in large numbers. In addition, many complexities and intersections among domestic workers and their employers are apparent and

heartfelt in a given community setting. Despite support and back up 'at home', full-time working mothers have to, for example, negotiate often multiple conflicting demands at work and at home as well as an intensive workload in work and an intensive care and domestic load, on a daily basis. The burden of responsibility that falls on women who are working mothers in Ireland cannot be simply 'removed' through outsourcing some of the care/domestic duties at home.

The varied family status and social class of mothers who employ domestic workers is an important consideration. Interconnectedness and relationality *among women* in local communities often cuts across intersectionality theory as it was originally envisaged and in a way that *complicates the terrain*. NGOs are by their nature made aware of particularly exploitative situations regarding domestic service. However, in an ethnographic setting, a range of manifestations of employer-employee relationships are apparent ranging from the utterly exploitative to the affective. Close bonds and sustained friendship also develop between Irish mothers and migrant domestic workers - despite the social and economic hierarchies that structurally underpin this sector. One mother I encountered told me her story. The migrant domestic worker who minds her children (her 'childminder', as she refers to her, from the Ukraine, 'Anna') is a qualified mid-wife but her qualifications are not recognised in Ireland and she cannot work in her profession *here*. She finds it amazing that her childminder, employed in her own home, is a qualified midwife (she is so qualified for the job and she *loves* her children). One could never imagine finding anyone as qualified in a public or private crèche, for instance, to care for her small children and the crèche would be infinitely *'more expensive'*. Nor would her children have one on one care from a midwife in the crèche either (the ratio is three children to every one carer in public crèches in Ireland). And, moreover, she reveals, Anna, as a childminder in Ireland, earns four times what she would earn as a midwife in the Ukraine. A win-win situation all round, it seems?

Yet, and on the other hand, Anna's work is not documented - it is undeclared, 'informal' and hence invisible. In terms of a crude political economy analysis, this micro example represents a whole series of fundamental global inequalities that are well documented in the field of migration studies and in intersectionality theory and which, arguably, Irish working mothers are complicit in. As an unregulated worker Anna has little redress if exploited or denied fundamental employment/human rights. At the same time, at the micro level, this story (like so many other stories I encounter) was complicated and not one of the stories of direct exploitation and indentured labour that has been documented in cases of live in domestic servitude, internationally.

The potentially exploitative employer-employee relationship was, however, in this example, coloured by the fact that the employer is, herself, also a qualified nurse/care worker. For the employer, this shared expertise in nursing seems to be a common identifier in their relationship - built around a common emotional bond with the children involved. Moreover, in this example, the employer is, herself, disadvantaged as an Irish lone parent who does not have a wider support system or a second regular income in the household to help her combine her work with the care of a two and a three year old; she is not a highly privileged married woman seeking social status from employing a domestic.

The links in the (care) chain and intersection of gender, class, ethnicity, personal life and relative privilege in this example therefore intersect and interweave at the local and global levels in a complex way. Women's lives operate in a wider gendered social and economic context that creates relative disadvantage along multiple intersecting axes. During the Celtic Tiger era, the working mothers I spoke to in an ethnographic setting regularly divulged their care arrangements almost as (guilty?) secrets to me, as an attempt to find a source of mutual solidarity with other struggling working mothers (and it is without doubt a struggle combining work and home) looking at informal ways of covering childcare in a less expensive and affordable way while ensuring

their children were happy. Through these conversations, mothers who identify with other mothers it could be said seek an alleviation of guilt, are searching for reassurance and are perhaps in denial of their position of relative privilege in the global network of care that disadvantages immigrant women. Guilt and ambivalence about working in the first place being the right thing to do, reinforced by a culture that constitutionally defines mother's life as in the home primarily, and guilt and a sense of unease about justifying the under or low payment of another (migrant) woman to mind their children is prevalent.

The unequal burden of responsibility being carried by working mothers, specifically, in contemporary Ireland was palpable in my research. The care of young children itself as well as the organisation of the care of the children and its negotiation with a childminder was also seen as mother's work primarily. Payment of the minder was also frequently considered to come out of the woman's salary even in two parent households. The emotional work of mothering in the case of working mothers therefore becomes extended in a whole set of emotional concerns to do with the payment, organisation, quality and regulation of child care that men and fathers seem to have little or much less involvement in. Mothers become employers as well as employees.

In an age of intensive mothering, chief among these emotional concerns are the amount of attention the children get, worry if they are ill, the quality of food the children eat, the amount of time their carer allows them to watch television, discipline, homework completion, risk and protection, and transportation and/or collection from school and extra curricular activities. Exhaustion and harbouring of resentment is a theme that arose frequently; resentment at partners capacity to switch off from the family when in work or at home, resentment of shouldering the bulk of the double burden of home and work, and resentment that a carer gets to have "all the fun with my kids when I am at work and then I have to double up and catch up on the practical work and cleaning up [the second shift] when I get home" in order

to prepare for the following day. The second shift in the case of infants can also extend into a third shift, a night shift involving night feeds and wakeful or sick children.

At the same time, these discourses of guilt, resentment, exhaustion, conflict in relationships and emotional work were often offset against the freedom 'delegated mother work' can provide - the freedom of going out to (meaningful?) work, of having a disposable income to purchase consumer goods, holidays etc and escaping the sheer relentlessness of being at home and on call 24 hours 7 days a week. One woman told me: "I look forward to going back to work on Mondays. The weekends are the worst. I have no help and the house is in a state after the week. Thankfully, my childminder comes in on Monday morning and I can get out of the house again."

The Implications of Migrant Domestic Work at the Local and Global Level

Caring for children usually relies on the cheapest labour available. The increased demand for childcare and domestic work in Ireland that is provided at home/in the home, of course, continues to be provided by Irish carers and cleaners but it is increasingly met by migrant women. In recent years, immigration policies and declining welfare benefits assure professionals of a ready pool of low-wage workers. The above section outlines some of the emotional implications of migrant domestic work for Irish working mothers. At the same time, the global impact of the delegation of care in this way has enormous implications for migrant women.

The work of both Arlie Russell Hochschild and Rhachel Parrenas is particularly instructive in locating the analysis of Ireland in this chapter in a wider structural and global framework.³⁰ Taken as a whole, Hochschild's research describes various ways in which each individual 'self' becomes a shock absorber of larger contradictory forces. Hochschild describes how we sometimes become estranged from ourselves, partly by adopting myths. Such

myths function to contain anxiety, she notes, and - like "false consciousness" - they obscure individuals' recognition of some difficult truths about modern capitalism.

The crisis in child care and domestic work caused by the entry of women with children into the European labour market is one of the 'difficult truths' of neo liberalism. Hochschild highlights the emotional cost and consequence of migrant domestic workers addressing the care deficit that has been generated in rich countries. Similarly, Parrenas studied migrant Filipina domestic workers who leave their own families behind to do the mothering and caretaking work of the global economy in countries throughout the world - focusing specifically on the emergence of parallel lives among such workers in the cities of Rome and Los Angeles, two main destinations for Filipina migration.

Many migrant domestic workers, for example, leave their own children with grandparents, a relative or another paid domestic worker to migrate in order to care for the children of the 'First world' and maintain these households. Increasingly, as Hochschild argues, emotional labour is going global. In her essay, "Love and Gold," she sets the concept of emotional labour in a larger political context. She describes a South-to-North "heart transplant" as immigrant care workers from such countries as the Philippines and Sri Lanka leave their young, their elderly and their communities in the poor South to take up paid jobs caring for the young and elderly in families and communities of the affluent North. Such jobs call on workers to manage grief and anguish vis-à-vis their own long-separated children, spouses, and elderly parents, even as they try to feel - and genuinely do feel - joyful attachment to the children and elders they daily care for in the West.

In reality, where both employer and employee families have childcare needs their purchasing power present completely different options - placing the children and family members of migrant domestic workers at an enormous disadvantage. The system of global care and privileges readily available to employers, Hochschild argues, determines childrearing and socialization while

reproducing class differences and ethnic hierarchies. Immigrant mothers employed as live-in nannies can be restricted to the most basic 'mothering' agenda of sending money home to house, feed, and clothe their children; while they simultaneously, sell their (emotional and physical) labour as caregivers to middle-class women who engage in intensive mothering. Under these conditions, quality time and mother-child activities that enhance the cognitive development of children become a privilege of some and not a right of all children globally.

For Hochschild, emotion is a resource that can be extracted from one place and taken to another. Rich countries can 'extract' love from poor ones, she concludes, in the broad sense that they are taking caregivers away from the South (or the East in the case of the EU) and transferring them to the North. But what is also extracted, she argues, is the emotion a person has partially displaced, in the psychoanalytic sense, from its original object (her own baby left behind) onto another (the baby she is now paid to care for). That displaced love is then further produced and 'assembled' in Los Angeles or Athens, (or in this case Dublin, Cork or Galway) in the rich North, with the leisure, the money, the ideology of the child, the intense loneliness and the intense sense of missing her own children.

In "Love and Gold," Hochschild therefore shows us a way of seeing the emotion of maternal love through the lens of global capitalism, a lens that also sheds critical light on recent developments in Ireland.³¹ Additional detailed empirical data is needed to investigate these questions more in the Irish context. However, in an era of 'intensive mothering' and entry of women with young children into the paid labour force, critical analysis of the contradictory conditions that are the source of multiple 'strains' in Irish women's lives, including emotional strains, is timely. The migrant worker, and domestic and care workers more generally, must also be included in the analysis as she also absorbs the 'strains' of displacement in her own life. Critical considerations in Ireland include the under/low payment of migrant domestic workers in the labour market, their often precarious legal position

and potential for subordinations in the worker/employer relationship in private homes that perpetuates a broader system of social inequality in which the care and domestic work provided by women, more generally, across Irish society remains profoundly marginalised and unregulated.

Conclusion

Much remains to be revealed about the 'difficult truths' of modern global capitalism, neo liberalism and its impact and formation in Ireland during the Celtic Tiger era. New formations of gender inequality both in the lives of Irish mothers and migrant domestic workers as well as between Irish mothers and migrant women, is a core dynamic in these forces. This chapter has given us a flavour of some of these 'truths' as well as the contradictions and strains as they apply to women's lives as mothers and carers, in particular. The entry of women with young children into the labour force during the Celtic Tiger was not matched by a simultaneous revolution in the arena of home and family. Instead, a stalled gender revolution in domestic life prevails and the emergence of new formations of social stratification and global injustices that enmeshes gender, ethnicity and class in a transnational order now exists in Irish local communities. In terms of addressing the gendered social order that consolidated during the Celtic Tiger in Ireland, there is little evidence of transformation in terms of further increasing men's involvement in the household as the immediate solution. All this combines with the derogation of the State on child care provision targets and its responsibility to support women in the workplace (gender mainstreaming) and working families (care) in line with the Lisbon Agenda and EU objectives. The recent collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy has seemingly stalled any possibility of the State adequately funding childcare or adopting a social democratic model, in the near future even if investment in other areas is apparent.

The dynamics examined in this chapter have strong resonance in Irish history and culture. Countless Irish women lived their lives as emigrants cleaning up and minding and rearing children in domestic households, in hospitals, in

schools and in other institutions across the globe. Irish women populated and ran the hospitals in the UK in the second half of the twentieth century.³² Irish nuns have historically also established a vast global network of care and education in the missionary movement.³³ In the US, the archetypal figure 'Bridget' became synonymous with domestic servants.

At the same time, Ireland during the Celtic Tiger years became a net importer of migrant domestic workers, a situation that has only recently been analysed. In terms of linking the past with the present, therefore, the following now arises in understanding gender, migration and networks of care. All that experience and historical memory has the potential to be tapped into and drawn upon as a way of responding creatively to the question of global migration, gender inequality and networks of care - remembering the way that Ireland is indeed linked into intricate global care chains as far back as the 19th century, including in Quebec.

To further understand the role of migration, domestic and care work in contemporary Ireland and in the wider global context we need to link micro, meso and global trends in a much stronger and historicised way. At the meso level of home and community, the domestic sphere is a much neglected field of analysis in major studies of social change and cultural transformation in contemporary Ireland. This chapter has sought to advance a new understanding of what the Celtic Tiger boom created by examining key changes in the arena of gender, migration, 'the home' and family, and care/domestic work. It has long been argued in feminist sociology that individuals in society occupy and move between both the private and the public sphere. Yet, mainstream analysis of the Celtic Tiger economy has both neglected and obscured the commodification of private aspects of our existence in this period - home and family.

Equally in migration studies, the private sphere has not been integrated well in the dominant economic analysis of migratory flows in Irish studies.³⁴ In terms of migration studies, most studies of Celtic Tiger Ireland have looked at

migration in terms of the 'public' spheres of work and ignored the migrant women working in Irish households. In contrast to other migrants who have been more visible working in the health services, the services sector, agriculture and construction, the migrant workers who are the subject of this chapter have been less visible/invisible.

Despite a vibrant historiography of Irish female migrant domestic workers in historical research, the experience of recent immigrants in the private sphere, working '*behind closed doors*,' has been neglected in the most recent phase of Irish history (the Celtic Tiger). It is hoped that this chapter offers some pointers for addressing this further. The concept of intimate citizenship, which has influenced sociology and migration studies elsewhere (for example in relation to the study of migrant sex workers), has not been well integrated in migration studies in Ireland and is a framework that can advance the study of migrant domestic work.³⁵ In addition, critical engagement with intersectionality theory provides Irish feminist studies and Irish migration studies with a real opportunity to transform the prevailing understanding of the Celtic Tiger era. Social class has long been considered the main agent of stratification in Ireland. Intersectionality theory has the potential to further inform the re-stratification that occurred in Ireland along class, gender and ethnic lines, in recent years. In the process, the extraordinary legacy of those Irish women who uniquely emigrated in their thousands to work as carers and domestics from the nineteenth century on, including in Quebec, can perhaps be reclaimed and tapped into as a source of transformation and reflection, at the current conjuncture.

Notes

¹ This working paper is the pre-publication version of a book chapter: Linda Connolly, "Migration and Domestic Service: Past and Present Trends in Quebec and Ireland," in Margaret Kelleher and Michael Kenneally (eds), *Ireland and Quebec. Multidisciplinary perspectives on history, culture and society* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016), chapter 9.

² Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myers, *Negotiating Identities in 19th and 20th Century Montreal* (Vancouver: University British Columbia Press 2005), 10.

³ Andy Bielenberg, *The Irish Diaspora* (London: Longmans 2000).

⁴ Marilyn Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association 1991).

⁵ Hasia R. Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1983).

⁶ Andrews Urban, "Irish Domestic Servants, 'Biddy' and Rebellion in the American Home, 1850–1900." *Gender and History* 21, no.2 (2009): 264.

⁷ Mary E. Daly, *Women and Work in Ireland* (Dundalk: Economic and Social History Society of Ireland 1997)

⁸ Mona Hearn, *Below Stairs: Domestic Service Remembered in Dublin and Beyond 1880-1922* (Dublin: Lilliput 1997).

⁹ Margaret Lynch-Brennan, *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America* (New York: Syracuse University Press 2009).

¹⁰ Faye E Dudden, "Experts and Servants: The National Council on Household Employment and the Decline of Domestic Service in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Social History* 20, no. 2 (1986): 269-289.

¹¹ Bridget Anderson, "Just Another Job? The Commodification of Domestic Labour" in *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, eds., Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (London: Granta Books 2000). Helma Lutz, ed., *Migration and Domestic Work. A European Perspective on a Global Theme* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2008). R. S. Parrenas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work* (Stanford: CA: Stanford University Press 2001).

¹² Lorna Siggins, "Many Irish people cared for by migrant workers." *The Irish Times*, September 25 2009.

¹³ Lutz, *Migration and Domestic Work*, 3.

¹⁴ 'The Celtic Tiger' refers to the brief period of economic boom that occurred in Ireland between 2000 and 2007. For research on domestic service in Quebec see: Jill Hanley, Stephanie Premji, Karen Messing, Katherine Lippel, 2010, *Action research for the health and safety of domestic workers in Montreal: Using numbers to tell stories and effect change*, *New Solutions: a Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, 20 (4), 421-39; Abigail B. Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis, 1997. *Not One of the Family: Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. Bakan and Stasiulis demonstrate how since the 1940s, rights of citizenship for immigrant domestic workers in Canada have declined while the number of women recruited from Third World countries to work in Canadian homes has dramatically increased.

¹⁵ Helen Russell, Francis McGinnity, Tim Callan and Clare Keane, *A Woman's Place: Female Participation in the Labour Market* (Dublin: ESRI 2009).

¹⁶ McWilliams, David. 2003. *Europe's Dearest Country with the Worst Childcare Provision* www.davidmcwilliams.ie.

¹⁷ The European-wide EUROCORES/ESF funded project (05_ECRP_FP041) "Migration and Networks of Care in Europe: A Comparative European Research Project" was conducted between 2005-09. The project produced comprehensive data and analysis in six countries – Ireland, UK, Poland, Germany, Netherlands, and the Ukraine. The research team included Linda Connolly, Caitríona Ní Laoire, Siobhan Mullally, Fiona Williams, Sarah Van Walsum, Eva Palenga-Mollenbeck and Helma Lutz.

¹⁸ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: The University of California Press 2002) 19.

¹⁹ Bridget Anderson, *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labour* (London: Zed Books 2002), 104.

²⁰ See also Jane Pillinger, *An Introduction to the Situation of Women Migrant Workers in Ireland* (Dublin: The Equality Authority 2006). Jane Pillinger, "The Changing Face of Ireland: Gender and the Feminisation of Migration," in *Where are We Now? New Feminist Perspectives on Women in Contemporary Ireland*, ed., Ursula Barry (Dublin: TASC 2008). Kieran Walsh and Eamonn O'Shea, *The Role of Migrant Care Workers in Ageing Societies: Context and Experiences in Ireland*, (Galway: NUIG 2009).

²¹ Pillinger, *An Introduction to the Situation of Women Migrant Workers in Ireland*, 6. See:

https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/download/pdf/an_introduction_to_the_situation_and_experience_of_women_migrant_workers_in_ireland.pdf

²² Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* With a new introduction by Anne Byrne, Ricca Edmondson and Tony Varley. (Ennis, County Clare: CLASP Press 2001).

²³ Grainne Collins and James Wickham, *What Childcare Crisis? Irish mothers entering the labour force*. (Report for the ERC Labour Market Observatory 2001): 5.

²⁴ Lutz, *Migration and Domestic Work*.

²⁵ Martin Ruhs and Eimear Quinn, *Ireland: From Rapid Immigration to Recession* (Migration Information Source: Migration Policy Institute 2009).

²⁶ Cameron McDonald, "Manufacturing Motherhood: The Shadow Work of Nannies and Au Pairs," *Qualitative Sociology* 21, no.1 (1998): 25-53.

²⁷ McDonald "Manufacturing Motherhood", 26.

²⁸ McDonald, "Manufacturing Motherhood", 26.

²⁹ McDonald, "Manufacturing Motherhood", 26.

³⁰ Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*. Parrenas, *Servants of Globalization*.

³¹ Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 15-30.

³² Louise Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood: The Experiences of Irish Nurses in Britain," *Sociology* 41, no.2, (2007): 295-312.

³³ Yvonne McKenna, *Made Holy: Irish Women Religious at Home and Abroad* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press 2006).

³⁴ Bryan Fanning, *Immigration and Social Change in the Republic of Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2007).

³⁵ Ken Plummer, *Intimate Citizenship: Private Decisions and Public Dialogues*. Seattle: University of Washington Press 2003).